

# IRS News Release

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## **E-file Nears 50 Million Returns as April 15 Approaches**

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WASHINGTON — With one week remaining before the April 15 deadline, taxpayers continue to turn to electronic filing at record levels. New statistics released today show that 48.5 million tax returns have been submitted through e-file so far, which remains 12 percent ahead of last year.

“To avoid last-minute tax headaches, we urge people to use e-file,” said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. “E-filing is the fastest, easiest way to do taxes. There are fewer errors, and taxpayers get their refunds in less than half the time of paper returns.”

Through April 2, e-filing remains well ahead of last year’s pace. It continues to show strong growth in several areas:

- Overall e-filing reached 48.5 million, which is more than 5 million ahead of last year’s pace.
- Home computer filers submitted more than 11 million returns, an increase of 21.3 percent from last year.
- Tax professionals filed more than 34.2 million returns electronically, a 13.7 percent increase from last year.
- The Free File program topped 2.7 million returns, a 23 percent increase from last year. Free File, a free e-filing service offered by private companies, can be accessed by visiting IRS.gov.

The IRS is also seeing high usage of the “Where’s My Refund?” feature on IRS.gov. More than 16.8 million people have visited the site this year to check on the status of their refunds.

“Taxpayers have discovered that ‘Where’s My Refund?’ is a quick, easy way to check on their refunds,” Everson said.

Taxpayers who file electronically can use the service within 72 hours of submitting their returns. Paper filers can use “Where’s My Refund?” three to four weeks after mailing their returns.

The “Where’s My Refund?” service is accessible from the IRS.gov home page. Instructions guide individual taxpayers through a process that asks for three pieces of information from their returns: Social Security Number, filing status and refund amount.

As the April 15 deadline approaches, the IRS has a variety of information available for taxpayers on its web site, IRS.gov. Visit the 1040 Central section to get copies of forms, answers to frequently asked questions, information about filing extensions and other valuable information for last-minute filing.

“At 1040 Central, taxpayers will find virtually everything they need for their 2003 tax return,” Everson said. “The 1040 Central page can be a one-stop location for help.”

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## 2004 FILING SEASON STATISTICS

Cumulative through the weeks ending 4/4/03 and 4/2/04

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>% Change</u>
<b>Individual Income Tax Returns</b>			
Total Receipts	80,191,000	81,021,000	1.0
Total Processed	73,670,000	75,838,000	2.9
<b>E-filing Receipts:</b>			
TOTAL	43,330,000	48,554,000	12.1
TeleFile (phone)	3,425,000	3,186,000	- 7.0
Computer	39,905,000	45,368,000	13.7
Tax Professionals	30,762,000	34,274,000	11.4
Self-prepared	9,143,000	11,094,000	21.3
<b>Current Tax Year Refunds Certified:</b>			
Number	65,783,000	67,889,000	3.2
Amount of principal	\$ 131.362 billion	\$ 142.540 billion	8.5
Average refund	\$1,997	\$2,100	5.1
<b>Direct Deposit Refunds:</b>			
Number	36,191,000	39,847,000	10.1
Amount	\$ 86.153 billion	\$ 98.128 billion	13.9
Average	\$2,381	\$2,463	3.4